



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

HAIL AND FAREWELL!

BY JACQUES COPEAU

FOR the first time in America, during two consecutive seasons (October, 1917-April, 1918, October, 1918-April, 1919), a single dramatic company, organized and homogeneous, has played in French more than fifteen pieces representing all the epochs of our theatre. This company of about fifty actors, thanks to a tireless industry, has produced all types of French dramatic art with constant and equally careful artistic attention, not only in the choice of repertoire, but also in the preparation, interpretation, and scenic decoration.

It will be forever to the honor of the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier to have been chosen, while all Europe was at war, to carry to our American friends this mission of French culture. With the war this mission also ends. We return to France, there to collaborate to the best of our ability for the great Peace Renaissance. And we take leave with gratitude, and not without sadness, of the hospitable city which during two years has been for us a second home.

Although I can bear witness to the sincerity and the honesty of our effort, it is not for me to judge of the results attained, nor of the possible consequences. The sympathy which other artists have shown us, the unanimous praise, unceasingly renewed, of the newspapers and periodicals of New York, the increasing number of friends which up to the last hour have grouped themselves about us, and finally the warmth of the adieux and the regrets which accompanied our departure, all sufficed to prove to us that we have not labored in vain. And this is our richest reward.

It has often been said to me, during our last weeks: "It will be after the Vieux Colombier is gone that the significance of its presence in New York will be really appreciated. When you are far away people will begin to do you justice."

And in fact I dare to hope that absence will not injure us. It is possible that we are leaving behind us something that will endure, that will grow, and will perhaps not be without influence, something that will live. I believe that the particular sentiment felt by the faithful of the *Vieux Colombier* who gathered each week, and even many times a week, in the little hall in 35th Street, they will not experience again in any other theatre. What they felt was the subtle presence of a soul which spoke to their own souls and to which they hoped each time to draw nearer. And thus, little by little, after having called them, held them, and took a place in their lives. This sentiment was not exactly admiration, nor yet the pleasure of being diverted. It was not only the enjoyment of beauty. There was in it above all a human quality, something intimate, over which the heart closes with pleasure and almost with jealousy, something that, for want of a better word, we call affection. Many a time I have met in the crowd a stranger who has said to me: "I went into the *Vieux Colombier* one day, by chance, and since then I have been to see every play." And many are they also who have confided to me: "Since I have been to the *Vieux Colombier* I have not entered any other theatre." Such is the quality of our friends. Attachment through affection: that is what we are proud to inspire. And

is it not a very French method of conquest, this joyous acquiescence of the spirit which surrenders itself, this free opening of the heart to natural beauty, this friendship for an art the principal charm of which is to be human?

is recruited among those who for a long time did not go to the theatre, preferring the reading of the drama to any commonplace interpretation which would disfigure it, and deriving their æsthetic pleasures from painting or music. It is because they



JACQUES COPEAU

When one speaks of our New York season of 1913-1914 as a success one uses a misleading word. The *Vieux Colombier* has never won *success* in any sudden and immediate sense. It has slowly but completely made conquest of the sensitive element in the public. Our Parisian public

have found upon our stage the pure presentment of masterpieces which they loved that they have given us their affection, and have kept it faithfully for us, as I am assured, during five long years of silence and of affliction. It is therefore with profound joy that we have seen this

same sentiment spring up here on the other side of the ocean as we have seen it arise before us wherever we have been. The friends of the *Vieux Colombier*, to whatever nation they belong and whatever tongue they speak, have between them a spirit of resemblance, almost of fraternity. They meet and recognize each other. And I like to think that those whom we have gained in New York will, when they come to France, know how to find their own way to our little house, and will there feel themselves at home.

This is why I do not share the sentiment of those who say that New York has not been fair to us, that we have not been understood there. Why? Because during forty-five weeks the theatre has not been full every evening? But in the darkest hours the solicitude of our friends was warmest, most earnest. They wrote to us: "Do not lose courage, remain yourselves, and do not leave us, we need you!" It is true that the best representations we have given have not been the best attended. But what pure enthusiasm in these small audiences, what quality in the applause, what love of culture! Perhaps only the lack of a little boldness kept some of them from rising and calling out, as did long ago that worthy man who stood up in the parquette to cry to Molière: "Courage, Molière! It is a good comedy!"



MME. TESSIER IN *LA VEINE*

One must resolutely resolve to be what one is and accept the consequences, and, as they say in French, "*tenir le coup*." It is absurd to do what others do not do, and at the same time to receive unanimous approbation which generally falls to those from whom we separate ourselves. We can not be at the same time purveyor to the élite and to the crowd, the servant of an ideal, and of the box-office.

The struggle which the *Vieux Colombier* has maintained in New York for the past two years was inherent in its very nature. We can say that we have risen above it, as we have remained ourselves. We have not filled our pockets, but we have saved our souls. Our American difficulties have been exactly the equivalent of those which we have encountered and surmounted in

Paris, with the obstacle of the language in addition.

In founding the *Vieux Colombier* in October, 1913, I declared war upon all existing theatres, against which I had struggled for ten years as writer and as critic, because it is commercial, without morality, without beauty, without idealism, and without life. I went contrary to its principles and its methods. Finding no great works among contemporary authors, I turned towards the past to find noble examples and pure models. Ignoring or refusing all that the public admired

or tolerated, I undertook, with absurdly inadequate means, to construct stone by stone a theatre absolutely new, which should be the refuge of the true poet. It was a proud position and full of dangers. It brought me the hostility of my com-

wrote; "the *Vieux Colombier* in New York! Why America is the country of stupendous advertising, of great headlines, of specialized artists, of sumptuous spectacles. We are the opposite of all this." They did me the honor to object



MME. BING IN *LE VOILE DU BONHEUR*

rades and the derision of the Journalists. But our work was able to inspire respect, affection, esteem. At the end of eight months we had gathered a public, new like our enterprise, and like it valiant.

In November, 1916, when the French Government, through the Minister of Fine Arts, proposed to me to reorganize my company for the purpose of installing a French theatre in New York, I was astounded: "You can not mean it," I

that the *Vieux Colombier* alone, excepting the Comédie Française, could worthily represent to foreigners French dramatic art, its traditions, and at the same time its creative force.

In January, 1917, when Mr. Otto Kahn, responding to the proposition of the French Government, generously offered to assure to me the existence of my enterprise in the United States, I made the same objections to him. His reply was to

ask me to reproduce here in all its integrity the renown of the French theatre. I accepted the directorship offered me only on condition that my artistic liberty should be absolute, and that I should have full authority.

In October, 1917, when the company of the *Vieux Colombier* arrived in New York, a lively publicity, but one which knew nothing of the quality or the nature of the enterprise, had prepared for us a public already vibrating with curiosity, but with curiosity only, and precisely the kind of a public the least capable of understanding us, of loving us, of sustaining us. It had been thought possible to create at a single stroke, and artificially, that which could only grow slowly, with sincerity, out of sympathy. The experience of those who had tried a few years before to make of the New Theatre a repertory theatre devoted to art and culture was to be repeated for the *Vieux Colombier*. When it opened its doors for the production of the *Fourberies de Scapin*, the press with one voice proclaimed that America at last possessed a veritable French theatre, and that New York was to see that which it had never seen before. These performances of the *Fourberies de Scapin*, were, in reality, if I am not mistaken and if I may speak frankly, among the strongest and most original that we have given. But the public turned from them with absolute unanimity. After this first week, notwithstanding a preparation to which every care was given, and a great sacrifice of money, we found ourselves, so to speak, deserted. It appeared plainly that if we were to have a public, we ourselves and we alone must win it. And this we set ourselves to do, day after day, week after week, by work, by patience, by faith, in spite of disappointments, desertions, treachery, in spite of fatigue, illness, mortification, and that frightful anguish

which crushes the exile whose country is invaded and threatened with destruction.

And little by little the friendships of which I have spoken came to us, through respect, through esteem, through this exchange of heart with heart, which gives generously, and receives a joy above price. Little by little we felt that about us was being recreated our own atmosphere and our own element. The exchange became easier and easier. A sort of intimacy established itself. From month to month, and from one season to the other, we could see this public form itself, adapt itself. And the friends of France, arriving in New York, found upon entering the hall of the *Vieux Colombier* in 35th Street, a little of the air of Paris. It is for this reason, that on departing we have the feeling of breaking a strong bond, the sorrow of leaving something dear to us which really belongs to us. And the evening of Monday the seventh of April, in making our adieux, our emotion was not feigned when we bowed for the last time before our New York friends, and when, yielding to a sincere impulse, they invaded the stage to grasp the hands which we held out to them, and to bring us, written on the leaves of programs, five hundred names, which we carry away with us. Five hundred Americans of New York, grouped around a French enterprise which they knew, which they loved, which they will not forget, and by which they do not wish to be forgotten, because it is French, and represents to their eyes the best of France; it is much more in my opinion, than the thousands of strangers who compose a crowd satisfied with the pleasure they have received, but which they do not prefer to any other pleasure.

For the moment, the work of the *Vieux Colombier* of New York is ended. But perhaps another work will commence: that of the *Friends of the Vieux Colombier*.